

RICHARD A. GREER

## Kulaokahu'a and Thomas Square: From Boom to Bust to Now

### THE BEGINNINGS

WHEN NEED MEETS GREED is not an inspiring concept, but it can be a great motivator. In the case at hand, need came first. John Ricord, the Attorney General reported in May 1845 that the Constitution of 1840 authorized organization of a complete government and framing of civil and criminal codes. Acts to establish an executive ministry, executive departments, and a judicial department followed in 1845-1847.<sup>1</sup> The governmental machinery thus engineered required the usual lubricant: taxpayer sweat. Doctor Gerrit P. Judd, then in charge of finance, projected a treasury shortfall of \$10,000 (expenses \$80,000, revenue \$70,000) for 1845. His recommendations for raising cash illuminated the times: increase import duties from three to five percent, *ad valorem*; abolish the half poll tax; tax mules, horses, and (biological) asses; issue certificates of nationality, to be renewed annually, to all foreigners living permanently under the laws of Hawai'i; appoint a commission to look into the validity of land and house titles, issuing new titles where justified, and charge for same; use stamped paper for legal transactions; have a graduated duty on all property got by inheritance or bequest; allow sale of land to His Majesty's subjects as freehold property, charging for titles or transfers of titles; review, if not abolish, land and labor taxes.<sup>2</sup>

There was a clear need for more. In its search for additional

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funds, the official eye rested on Kulaokahu'a, also called the Waikīkī Plain or just The Plain. This unpalatable stretch of real estate sprawled between the American mission and Makiki Stream. An area which an overheated promoter might have referred to as one of sweeping vistas, Kulaokahu'a was best known for dust storms and impressive nothingness. It was so empty that after Punahou School opened in July 1842, mothers upstairs in the mission house could see children leave that institution and begin their trek across the barren waste. Trees shunned the place; only straggling livestock inhabited it.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the money-hungry government proposed to foist ownership on those whose wild optimism might fit them for such a maneuver. To this end it placed an advertisement in the *Polynesian* of November 21, 1846:

#### Building Lots

The Minister of the Interior is prepared to sell or lease Building Lots between Honolulu and Waikiki, on application being made according to law. [Nov. 14, 1846]

In advance of this announcement, the government had built three roads with arched stone bridges. The former were extensions of King, Young, and Beretania Streets; the bridges spanned Makiki Stream. At about the same time certain lots were surveyed and numbered, and during the 1846-1850 period the Privy Council granted lots to Cashier of the Treasury George M. Robertson (a gift for service), printer James Peacock, musician James Anderson, mason James Lewis, grazier George Bush, William Jarrett, painter Thomas Darling, and James Vanbergen, G. P. Judd's cowherd. Other recipients included sexton J. W. Hayward, Joseph Toul, District Attorney John R. Jasper, William ap Jones, Robert G. Davis (brother of California early-bird William Heath Davis Jr.), William Headrick, and Honolulu Harbor Master and Pilot David P. Penhallow. The usual price: \$40. In early 1850, the government was embarrassed to find that it had sold to mason John Sweetman four lots belonging to Mataio Kekūānā'o'a, the Governor of O'ahu. The latter got a \$160 credit.<sup>4</sup>

These preliminary sales hardly constituted a stampede. At this rate, great civilizations might have waxed and withered away ere the Waikīkī Plain became a blooming, peopled suburb. The slow pace resulted not only from the repellent nature of Kulaokahu‘a, but also from the restrictive land laws then extant. In June 1847, these were relaxed somewhat by letting aliens get fee simple title to lands in their possession at the date of the new act, on payment of the regular commutation, but with the limitation that such lands could be sold afterward only to Hawaiian subjects. The chief product of the move was foreigners’ protests. On June 14, 1850, Superior Court Judge William L. Lee proposed to the Privy Council an act to “abolish the disabilities of aliens to acquire and convey lands in fee simple.” The council approved laying the act before the legislature. On July 10, 1850, the law eliminated the requirement that any foreign-born grantee had to be a naturalized Hawaiian subject, and aliens got equal ownership and use rights.<sup>5</sup>

Dramatic effects followed. For example, sales of government land by acres on O‘ahu were: 1846—850.54; 1847—171.53; 1848—488.40; 1849—2,022.22; 1850—15,330.66; 1851—5,567.81; 1852—7,938.87. Government lands on O‘ahu, sold from September 1846 to December 31, 1857, totaled 41,679.59 acres (fig. 1). The price: \$78,628.84.<sup>6</sup>

The new law pumped up interest in Kulaokahu‘a, which became a target of what the *Pacific Commercial Advertiser* later called “the excitement,” perhaps better described as widespread hyperactivity of the mammon glands. The late novelist Lawrence Durrell wrote insightfully that “those who have tendencies need scope”; the extent of Kulaokahu‘a offered a broad arena in which to gratify speculative urges.

In 1849, Theophilus Metcalf surveyed the area between King and Kīna‘u Streets, including a range of lots above part of the latter, and between a lane near today’s South Street and Makiki Stream (upper Kalākaua Ave.)—329 numbered lots, 100 by 150 each. Lots 227–229, 243–245, 315–317, and three lots adjoining the rear of the last-named group were reserved as sites for churches and schools. Curtis J. Lyons resurveyed Kulaokahu‘a in 1871–1873 and surveyed above Kīna‘u Street in the latter year. Marcus D.

# Index of Grants Koolackahua.

No	Grantee	Lots	Area
2	Robertson G. M.	10 & 11	846 fms.
3	Lucas, John	9	423 - do -
10	Jarrett, G. P.	27 & 28	814 - do -
11	Leinakauna, G. S.	25 - 26	830 - do -
14	Darling Thomp	29	1201 - do -
26	Smith, Jno.	14	423 - do -
35	Robertson, G. M.	8	" - do -
37	Bush & co.	-	1 1/3 acres
49	Auwaa	5	423 fms.
52	Wose, S. W.	12	" - do -
73	Knight, Jno.	24	421 - do -
76	Garrison, A.	13	423 - do -
77	Cummins, Isaac	7	" - do -
108	Jones, W. A. P.	22 - 23	854 - do -
151	Jasper, J. P.	33 - 34	" - do -
178	Sheldon, W. L.	30 -	397 - do -
197	Sweetman, J.	3, 4, 15, 16	1 ac. 482 fms
208	Lee, W. L.	35, 36, 37, 38, 39	1 ac. 895 fms
283	Metcalf, Theophilus	114, 115, 116	1250 fms
284	Spalling, J. C.	-	833 fms 12 ft.
285	Bowlin, R. D.	119 - 120	833 fms 12 ft.
286	Howland, R. D.	121 - 122	833 fms 12 ft.
284	Manini, P. F.	123 - 124	" " "
288	Rhodes, Henry	31 - 32	798 fms
289	Wyllie, R. C.	44, 45, 74, 75	1668 fms 10 ft.
290	Holbert, L. L.	46, 47, 72, 73	1661 fms 30 ft.
291	Andrews, L. Jr.	48, 71 -	823 " - 18 ft.
292	Allen, A.	49, 50, 69, 70	1651 " - 34 ft.
293	Thompson, Maria J.	51, 52, 67, 68	1645 " 20 ft.
294	Armstrong, R.	53, 54, 65, 66	1639 "
297	Rhodes, Henry	82, 83	840 " 9 ft.
298	Partridge, Clement	108 - 109 -	840 " 9 ft.
299	Davis, R. G.	84, 85, 106, 107 -	1677 " 34 ft.
300	Penkallow, W. P.	86, 87 - 104 - 105	1675 fms 14 ft.
301	Dudoir, Jules	88, 89, 102 - 103 -	1672 " 30 ft.

# Index of Grants Kulaokahua.

No.	Grantee	Lots	Area
302	Goodale, W.	94, 95, 96, 97	3226 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 33 ft.
303	Sayre, N. J.	130 -	402 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 38 ft.
304	Byham, J. W.	131-132	833 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 13 ft.
305	Thurston, A. G.	143-144-145-146	1742 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 38 ft.
306	Ruggles, Eli, S.	58, 59, 60, 61	1943 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 17 ft.
307	Loden, Bartholomew	-	1486 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 13 ft.
361	Miller, Wm. Dr. M. B. C.	80, 81, 110, 111	1 <sup>279</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 1210 ac.
362	Currell, Joel.	259, 260, 279, 300	1 <sup>344</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 1210 ac.
363	Allen, Elisha Dr. (A. C.)	55, 56, 63, 64	1 <sup>432</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 1210 ac.
364	- do - - do - - do -	57-62	843 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 9 fms
365	Crabbe, Oronzio, N.	257-258	840 fms
366	Belcomb, Chas.	141, 152, 153	6250 "
367	Lumpkney, Rosa M.	154-155	833 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
368	Smith, Edmund.	156-157	833 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
369	Snow, Benj. J.	158-159	833 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
370	Stuart, Chas. S.	161	416 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
371	M. E. Nil, Wm. Henry.	150	416 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> "
372	Whitney, M. P.	212, "13, "14, "15	1 <sup>574</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 1210 ac.
373	Rhodes, Henry.	162, 163, 135, 136	1652 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 9 fms
374	Robinson Oct	90, 91, 100, 101 -	3 <sup>308</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 1210 ac.
375	Mrs Jarvis Dugald	182, 183, 210, 211 -	3 <sup>308</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 1210 ac.
376	Howard, Sarah	92, 93, 98, 99 - 151	3 <sup>12</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 1210 ac.
377	Bowlin C. W.	184, 185, 160, 142 -	925 fms
378	Thurston, A. G.	180, 181	1 <sup>454</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 1210 ac.
484	Bishop, Artemas	137, 138, 139, 140.	1 <sup>184</sup> / <sub>2</sub> 1210 ac.
500	Whitney, Henry W.	147, 148, 149.	666 fms - 24 ft.
501	Keoni Ana	-	216, 279, 277, 278.
502	Garrison, John A.	280, 281, 282, 283.	2 ac. 913 f. 12 ft.
646	Goodale, Warren	19, 20, 21, 40, 41	2 ac. 221 fms
3239	Jaeger, Albert	-	5 fms
3240	Clarke, Anna R. Mrs	18	639 fms - 2 ft.
3165	A. Jaeger	-	4500 59 ft.
3241	Smith, W. J.	166, 127-167	9382.1 ft.
3242	Agnew, D. J.	126-168-125	67,050 "
3243	May, Eliza	-	1.2 acres
		370, 372, 374	162,000 feet
		343, 353	3.33 acres
		171-172	35,000 feet

# Index of Grants Kulaakakua

No.	Grantee	Lots	Area
3244	Spencer, A. S.	173-174	80,000 "
3245	Kapamui (w)	1/2 Lot 351	35,265 "
3246	Smith, W. J.	368	49,032 "
3259	Kukona, James	263	15,000 "
3260	Kahookanohana (w)	264	15,000 "
3261	Castle, Ida, B. Mrs.	335, 336, 337, 338	122,080 "
3262	Eidman, S. A. Mrs.	164, 128, 129, 165 and others.	67,030 "
3265	Brown, Cecil	184, 185, 208, 209	56,060 "
3266	West, Lideon	339	75,010 "
3267	Mc, Grew, John S.	321, 322, 323, 324	2.75 acres
3268	Pina Jose de	363	1.38 "
3269	Wolfe, C. F.	360, 362	2.75 "
3275	Bawoss, Joseph	365	1.00 acre
3276	Agnur, Dr. J.	333, 334	60,000 feet
3277	Perry, Joseph	218, 254	29,380 "
3283	Kraft, August	367	1.96 acres
3284	O'Kern, Clara L.	—	* 3.69 "
3285	Lichman Robert	364, 366, 371, 373	5.48 "
3286	- do - - do -	369	34,000 feet.
3291	Vassinger, John Adair	346, 355, 357	5.51 acres
3292	Thomas, Edward, B.	317, 318 -	1.71 "
3296	Castle, Wm. R.	406	60,000 feet
3297	Roderique, Louis rec.	219	14,690 "
3298	Everett, Edward	325, 326, 327 - 328, 329, 330	180,000 "
3299	Emerson, Nath. M.	269-290	30,000 "
* 3301	Wong Kwai.	93, 92, 99, 98	59880 "
3302	Bornander, C. O. (w)	352	80530 "
3304	Stirling, Robert	404, 405	3.18 acres
3305	Beckley, Geo. C.	188, 189, 204, 205	1.26 "
3307	Kirani Eloraly C. Dr.	253	14,690 feet
3308	Batcock, William	356-358	130,050 feet
3309	Mehuawale, Heoki	295	15,000 "
3312	Lideon, West	341	60,000 "
3313	Quigle, J. M.	345	60,000 "

\* Grant 3301 = 2 Roy. Pat. original see Lit. 375. \* area = 1/2(3.69) = 1.84+ac.

# Index of Grants Kulaokahu'a

No	Grantee	Lots	Area
3314	Wilder, William, C.	348, 359, 359 <sup>361</sup>	240,000 "
3316	Emerson N. B. & Co. S	Range of 409-410 <sup>K</sup>	2.08 acres
3317	Castle, G. M. (wife of Jas. B. B.)	407-408 <sup>K</sup>	
3322	Kukona, Wana.	413, 14, 15 & 416	120,000 ft.
3323	Castle, Ida, M. Mrs.	296	10,000 "
3324	Lowrie, Fred. J.	409-410 <sup>part</sup>	90,000 "
3325	Smith Wm. O.	411, 412 <sup>part</sup>	40,140 "
3326	King, Maria	406 1/2	60,000 "
3327	Kaukua A.B.	348	60,000 "
3328	Kahowai, M. B.	319-320	30,000 "
3329	Smith Wm. O.	293-266	83,308 "
3330	Knuksen, Valdemar	375, 377	5.87 ac.
3333	Quoad, Grace, Alice,	-	3.03 "
3334	Ahlo, L.	417-418 <sup>244</sup>	58,810 fr.
3335	Robinson, John, N.	228, 229, 243 <sup>244</sup>	29,320 "
3336	Simon, James, S.	2130-2142 <sup>239, 240, 241</sup>	2.03 acres
3337	Antoni Frank	233, 234, 238	30,855 fr.
3338	Lazarus, J.	-	27,520 "
3339	Selig, S.	191-202	27,600 "
3340	O. Bradley	203-190	27,440 "
3341	P. O'Hama	192-201	29,440 "
3342	Toler, Wm. O.	227-245	60,000 feet
3345	Kistace C.	291, 292, 267, 268	30,000 "
3349	Moriarty Wm.	169, 170	30,000 "
3352	S. McAdams	265-294	55,600 "
3355	Dyett, James.	206, 207, 186, 187	20,000 "
3356	Gasper, G.	331, 332, 333, 334	60,000 "
3357	Rivcastle, Thomas	347	30,000 "
3358	Henry Britteman	175, 176	60,000 "
3359	Bickerton, Richard E.	270, 271, 288, 289	29,380 ft.
3360	Oliram, Charles.	217-255	" "
3361	P. Kawai	220-252	" "
3188	Ann, L.	177-178-179	

FIG. 1. Index of plans—Kulaokahu'a, showing grantees and area. (AH.)



Monsarrat copied and added to the map in 1882. On August 30, 1850, the Privy Council ended its street-naming session with Kulaokahua: 30—Young St.; 31—Kamehameha St. [Beretania]; 32—Kinau St.; 33—Victoria St.; 34—Washington St. [Pi'ikoi]; 35—Keaumaka St. [Ke'eaumoku]. Kapiolani St. (Ward Avenue above King Street) did not appear on the original survey but had been cut through by 1882.<sup>7</sup>

A survey does not a city make, as those wandering critters testified. Hoping to project a more urban image of The Plain, government decreed that after May 4, 1850 no horses, cattle, or other animals could run at large there. The creatures thus addressed could not decipher this message, and more than 30 years later agents were being appointed to take up strays.<sup>8</sup>

The government acted promptly to cash in on the real estate boom. At the end of April 1850, the Cabinet Council agreed to recommend to the Privy Council that Keoni Ana, the Minister of the Interior, be instructed to dispose of a number of lots at prevailing prices. Beneficiaries included English Consul General William Miller and Foreign Minister Robert C. Wyllie, who bought four lots each.<sup>9</sup>

As May began, Keoni Ana got authority to sell lots already applied for at a minimum price of \$40 each. But no one except the King and the Prime Minister could buy more than four lots. Keoni Ana should also sell at auction on the second Monday of August 50 lots not applied for and should sell other lots remaining, again at public auction, when he chose. Early in July, a chart and a description of Kulaokahu'a were at the auction room of Sea and Bartow; the *Polynesian* announced the sale of 50 lots on August 12. On this occasion all lots offered were sold at from \$44 to \$125, the average price being \$72. The same newspaper dug in the spurs in time-hallowed fashion, observing that real estate was on the rise, and ending with the immemorial "now is the time to invest." The recent law was expected to bring in "moneyed men" from California and elsewhere.<sup>10</sup>

It certainly brought in many prominent Honoluluans. Charles R. Bishop and William L. Lee, Kulaokahu'a dabblers, took another fling on a larger scale. They bought 27 acres about a half-mile townward of Punahou and got the privilege of taking water



from a mountain stream. The seller, Mataio Kekūānāo'a, received \$2,000.<sup>11</sup>

At the end of December 1850, Lee wrote of lots selling at auction at an average price of more than \$100. But two months later land trading was dull, and very few of the Kulaokahu'a parcels had been improved—certainly no small task. Prices remained firm through March 1852—with, however, few sales. As 1853 ended, the lots were “not in demand,” a phrase repeated by Bishop in April 1855. Apparently Kulaokahu'a's desert environment transmitted dry rot to land values there. Bishop wrote in 1856 that he had sold his two lots at auction for \$25 each. Kulaokahu'a plots were in mid-1858 almost worthless, only two or three of all sold having been improved. There appeared no prospect of rising prices. At the end of February 1860, Bishop declared that lots on the plain would not bring one-third their cost. In 1864, the *Advertiser* noted that the Kulaokahu'a lots still lay “all unfenced and barren and unproductive as investments as the day they were sold.”<sup>12</sup>

Parcels included in Metcalf's original survey appreciated somewhat through 1880. In that year, offers of \$50, \$75, and \$100 were still being made, but a very few reached \$300. The latter would amount to \$1,200 for a block of four lots with a total of 60,000 square feet.<sup>13</sup> As bust followed boom, it appeared that any investor of 1850 who survived long enough to make a really spectacular killing would have become a celebrity—but as a medical curiosity rather than a wizard speculator.

The restoration of the Hawaiian Monarchy in July 1843—ending the five-months-long illegal seizure and occupation by the Englishman, Lord George Paulet—created the chief, and indeed the only, notable site in Kulaokahu'a. The exact locale—the future Thomas Square—leaped into history with, literally, a bang. On the morning of July 31, two pavilions decorated with greens and a flagstaff stood on the plain east of town. On the street line to the west, tents from warships in port punctuated their arid surroundings. A thick mat of rushes paved the line of march. Thousands waited for the ceremonies of the day. At 9:30, Rear Admiral Richard Thomas of the British navy called on the King to sign official documents. A half hour later, several compa-

nies of English sailors and marines were drawn up on a line facing the sea, with an artillery corps on their right. Admiral Thomas and his staff arrived in the King's state carriage, while the Monarch himself came on horseback, accompanied by the household troops. The artillery honored His Majesty with a 21-gun salute. At a given signal, the British flag officer bowed his colors; the British flag was then lowered and the Hawaiian flag raised amid salvos, first from Thomas's HMS *Carysfort*, then from English and American warships, merchantmen and whalers, and finally from the Honolulu fort and the Punchbowl battery.

A great cheer arose as the wind caught the folds of the Hawaiian flag. Admiral Thomas read a long declaration, after which marines, sailors, and artillery passed in a review witnessed by Commodore Lawrence Kearney and officers of the USS *Constellation*. Hawaii's sovereignty had been restored.<sup>14</sup>

The bigwigs departed, the sailors and marines went back to their ships, the crowd evaporated, and the four-footed foragers reclaimed their domain. It was not until some six years later that Metcalf's survey set aside space for a park. On January 22, 1850, the Privy Council named Thomas Square and voted to choose a day to fix its boundaries. It picked March 8. The Council then decided that Metcalf's proposed area was too small; it reserved lots 42, 43, 76, 77, 78, 79, 112, and 113, thereby pushing the Square's eastern edge to Victoria Street. The King intended to ride out on Restoration Day (July 31) to the exact spot where Admiral Thomas raised the Hawaiian flag, and to there christen the square before the assembled multitude. This promotional effort crumbled when Kamehameha III fell ill. But Honolulu now had a paper park in a paper subdivision.<sup>15</sup>

Both sank like pig iron. In the early 1850s, some ceremonies celebrated the Restoration, but the practice faded away. As a recreational mecca, the dusty waste of the Square had the pull of a sauna in the Sahara. *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser* in 1864 called for a public park. The unfenced and unimproved Thomas Square could have been made into an ornament of the city and a lever to raise property values around it. But this decorative hoist did not materialize. Nine years later, some small prospect of a park appeared. Plans in 1873 specified a cheap fence and some tree-

planting. The fence rose; workers sowed oats and algaroba seeds. The oats were harvested, and the algaroba clung to life. That was it. Ni'ihau burr soon overgrew the whole area. Those who hoped for a wooded retreat were destined to pine. Trying to give the square some purpose, the government in 1876 granted blacksmith and machinist C. C. Coleman a year's use to cultivate jute, an experimental crop. He would get free water and prison labor but had to keep hands off the precious algaroba and other trees then growing.<sup>16</sup>

It was about this time that merchant Archibald S. Cleghorn (husband of Princess Miriam Likelike, father of Princess Ka'iu-lani, and brother-in-law of Kalākaua and Lili'uokalani) took charge of Honolulu's "park system," which then consisted of Thomas Square and Emma Square. He piped water into the former and began an ambitious improvement project under the aegis of the Minister of the Interior. Little was accomplished until 1882 when, stimulated by a small legislative appropriation, the minister cited fenced a lot at the corner of King and Kapi'olani (now Ward) Streets and planned a nursery under the care of a Mr. Jaeger. He also sent to Singapore for mangostura and durian trees. Envisioning a row of palms around the square, he asked the public to donate them. Hylomania ruled.<sup>17</sup>

In this year of 1882, Charles M. Cooke built his residence directly across Beretania Street from Thomas Square (the present site of the Honolulu Academy of Arts). Every day the Cookes had visual evidence that Kulaokahu'a's emptiness persisted. Their veranda commanded an unobstructed ocean vista from Diamond Head to Honolulu Harbor. Over in the square, fledgling trees rose no higher than the barrels protecting them from visiting livestock. Second-floor windows framed a clear view of Punahou School.<sup>18</sup>

The actual laying out of the park fell to Robert Stirling. With Cleghorn's approval, he converted the Square into a series of circles and semi-circles. But suddenly a THUD vibrated the air. It was the sound of a descending financial axe. In May 1883, Minister of the Interior John E. Bush reproved Cleghorn for ignoring the dire condition of the treasury. Bush was not hallucinating: at the end of the 1882-1884 biennium, the balance in the strongbox

was \$2,220.42, while the national debt was a towering \$898,000.<sup>19</sup> All work would stop.

The determined and resourceful Cleghorn brought in banyan trees from 'Āinahau, his Waikīkī estate. He planted crotons in clusters. He canvassed his friends for money to carry on plans for a bandstand, seating, and landscaping. Mr. F. Wilhelm designed and put up the central bandstand. Walks, valuable trees, shrubs, and other plants appeared. Thirty-four seats were installed—10 of iron, imported from England, and the rest of wood, made to order in Hawai'i. A wide path along the outer fence capped improvements. With all this magnificence came the usual warning: DON'T TOUCH THE PLANTS!<sup>20</sup>

The evening of April 7, 1887 saw the park's grand opening as the Royal Hawaiian Band gave a dedicatory concert. It was a phenomenal success. A huge crowd strolled the grounds. Carriages lined all surrounding roads. The King attended, but even His Majesty could not proscribe an ancient enemy. Blinding dust clouds whisked to and fro around and over the celebrating masses. But Honoluluans were well used to dust, and here at last was an occasion worthy to succeed the ceremonies of 1843. No instant magic brought this happy denouement; 41 years had passed since that modest advertisement in the *Polynesian* drew attention to Kulaokahu'a.<sup>21</sup>

#### MORE OR LESS RECENT EVENTS

Gripped by promoters' euphoria, the original planners of Kulaokahu'a foresaw a community that would rise to Distinguished, or at least Delightful, on the D-scale. Merely Desirable would hardly do. But the gauge eventually stuck not far above Dull. A forgettable mix of residences and small businesses (with the latter taking over more and more) made the stretch for many a place to go through, not to.

Some sites do deserve notice.

The First Chinese Church of Christ at 1054 South King Street, the successor to the Fort Street Chinese Church, was designed by Honolulu architect Hart Wood and built at a cost of \$160,000.

Dedicated in June 1929, the much-photographed church is a cherished architectural gem.<sup>22</sup>

Near Ke‘eaumoku Street is the Detention Home for juvenile offenders. For decades it has been in Kulaokahu‘a—first on the *makai* (toward the ocean) side of King Street and later at its present location on Alder Street in the same immediate neighborhood. Constantly criticized and periodically tinkered with, it is now a state agency under the Family Court. Late in 1947, after the legislature voted \$106,000 for major improvements, Governor Ingram M. Stainback asked for transfer of title from the city and county.<sup>23</sup>

Across King Street stood the Civic Auditorium with its silver-painted dome and (if memory serves) walls of a shade reminiscent of a barnyard product. “Civic Auditorium” suggests a wide spectrum of cultural events. Actually, perspiration rather than inspiration was the usual order of the evening as wrestlers and prizefighters grunted and groaned.

The Civic, dedicated in January 1933, was a privately-owned project of Manual Calhau and managed by Edward Ratsch. The \$150,000 steel and concrete structure could seat 6,500 spectators around a central area large enough to accommodate a full-sized tennis court and fitted with a portable stage.<sup>24</sup>

Like some of its unfortunate contestants, the auditorium staggered to the ropes almost immediately under the heavy blows of a couple of mortgages and numerous loans. A series of public auctions with an upset price of \$65,000 brought no takers. A court order removed the upset, and in April 1935 E. J. Lord bought the Civic for \$40,500 at a foreclosure sale. After another sale in December 1938, a \$225,000 expansion was announced in September 1946. Mention of this era cannot omit the names of promoters Al Karasick and Sad Sam Ichinose, who were so much part of it.<sup>25</sup>

Some would say that the Civic’s career peaked in November 1959 when the touring Vienna Philharmonic under Herbert von Karajan took the floor. A reporter diplomatically labeled the audience “largely unfamiliar with the Civic.” This was Honolulu’s “cultural cream,” soon to be soured by the auditorium’s inferior acoustics. That the music was LOUD failed to improve matters—

although, depending on the program, it might have lent a certain legitimacy to Mark Twain's comment that "Wagner's music is really better than it sounds." Karasick, said to have danced with Nijinsky, left the arena muttering that von Karajan was a Nazi.<sup>26</sup>

More in character, perhaps, was the closing event of August 16, 1961—a "screaming, chair-throwing brawl" that erupted one minute after Curtis Iaukea won the Hawaiian heavyweight wrestling championship from Neff Maiava. As the victor headed for the dressing room, some 20 irate fans surged to the attack. Iaukea made it through the door, which a group of his critics tried to flatten with a bench. One rioter grabbed a cripple's crutch to use as a club. Some two dozen police officers joined the 15-minute battle. The final score: three possible skull fractures and two dazed cops, one caressed with a concrete tile. But all things must end, and in April 1974 the Civic Auditorium became just a memory. By the tenth of that month only rubble remained.<sup>27</sup>

To the west, Thomas Square attracted two institutions of a higher order. Both are products of this century. At the corner of Beretania and Victoria Streets, the original McKinley High School opened in 1908. Architect H. L. Kerr designed this structure in the "Georgian Revival" mode, thus obeying the dictum that every pretentious erection must be classified. We are now moving from Big Box to Territorial Revival (an improvement) and doubtless to other categories for which new terms such as International Outrageous may have to be invented. The high school outgrew this home and moved to the existing campus in 1923. The old building became Lincoln Elementary School, the first of the so-called "English standard" schools which required passage of a verbal English test for admission. It was renamed Linekona (a Hawaiianization) in 1957. Leased to the Honolulu Academy of Arts in 1986, the building after renovation began a new career in January 1990 as the Academy's education center. Two facts aided the site's enrollment in the National and the State Registers of Historic Places: it is Honolulu's last remaining public schoolhouse put up before World War I, and it is the first in Hawai'i to have been designed as a high school.<sup>28</sup>

Across Beretania Street from Thomas Square, the Honolulu Academy of Arts serves major cultural needs, whether these arise

from a keen esthetic sense or from the desire to redeem a self-image compromised by less praiseworthy leisure pursuits. The Academy's name implies an educational mission, and such indeed was the aim of its founder, Mrs. Charles M. (Anna R.) Cooke. The site occupies lots 125-129 and 164-168 of the original survey. In 1880, Grant 3240 to Mrs. Anna R. Cooke conveyed the six *ewa* (toward Ewa or West O‘ahu) lots, and in the same year Grant 3262 sold to Mrs. Sarah A. Gilman the four lots east of them. By the end of 1881, if not before, Kapi‘olani Street ran along the *ewa* edge of Mrs. Cooke's property.<sup>29</sup>

Bertram Goodhue was the architect of the “Hawaiian style” building. Both it and the land it stood on were gifts of Mrs. Cooke. After Goodhue's death, Hardie Phillip of the same firm took over. Proceeding under a somewhat simplified plan, construction ended in December 1926, and the Academy opened April 8, 1927. The contract had specified a cost of \$328,444. An “educational wing” designed by Albert E. Ives was completed in 1960. The Claire Booth Luce wing, the gift of that lady and of the Henry Luce Foundation, was dedicated in December 1977.<sup>30</sup> In February 1978, the City and County covered all bases when it created the Thomas Square/Academy of Arts Historic, Cultural, and Scenic District. What of the National Register of Historic Places? We shall see.<sup>31</sup>

Thomas Square, the focal point, is today a quiet pool of shade, and little more. Gone are the bandstand, the fancy plantings and flower beds—because gone, too, is the concept of open space as something to be filled up and prettified (we do not address here the rising problem of vandalism). Big trees and stretches of inviting grass are paradise enough. The uncluttered area occasionally accommodates affairs such as dog shows and weddings. The more frequent craft fairs testify to the widespread leisure characteristic of our advanced society and to our reverence for creativity at whatever level expressed.

The reigning calm is not the result of orderly evolution; rather, the Square's history supports the view that anything which endures requires salvation at some point or points. After the Monarchy fell, many of its functionaries were sacrificed on the altar of change. One such was Cleghorn, whose park-related



duties went in 1895 to Joseph Marsden, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry.<sup>32</sup>

The first threat came down the tracks (literally) only three years later when the Honolulu Rapid Transit Co. got its charter in 1898. At once a question arose: shall the trams run through Thomas Square? The answer—NO!—came after an effective public protest killed the proposal.<sup>33</sup>

Seemingly dead, menace but slumbered. Growing throngs of cars clogged the King and Beretania arteries, and by early 1925 battle lines formed to contest the issue: shall Young Street bisect Thomas Square? Hostilities dragged on and on. Initially, Governor Wallace R. Farrington favored the idea, but loud cries of dissent swayed him to the view that wider sampling of reaction was needed, especially since the Square was a playground for M. M. Scott and Lincoln Schools. In some respects it was Dollars versus Do Nots. The Honolulu Board of Supervisors (championing a proposal of member Louis S. Cain), the Chamber of Commerce, and the Honolulu Realty Board faced the Daughters and Sons of Hawaiian Warriors, the Honolulu Ad Club, the Hawaiian Historical Society, the Hawaiian Civic Club, the Representatives' Club, and the Parent-Teachers Associations of Lincoln and McKinley.<sup>34</sup>

The only argument for cutting the Square was that doing so would hasten traffic to southeast Honolulu. The Board of Supervisors fired an opening salvo by asking the legislature to repeal a joint resolution forbidding a cut. Next came the introduction of bills to do just that. A third action involved legislative consideration of the issue. The date now approached mid-1929. The *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* urged public hearings and a widening of King Street "before costly and permanent buildings are put up."<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, a development that undermined the would-be bisectuals proceeded. This was the construction of Kapi'olani Boulevard, which promised to divert most Waikīkī-bound traffic. Apparently the concept originated during the governorship of Charles J. McCarthy. His plan for the thoroughfare dropped a suggestion that it be called Missionary Boulevard. It seems that nearly everyone hearing this idea dropped it, too. By the end of March 1926, the *Honolulu Advertiser* trumpeted, "Kapiolani Boule-

ward Assured,” informing that nearly a million dollars would go into the project—a 100-foot roadway extending a mile and three-fourths from South Street to Kalākaua Avenue. “May be ready by next year,” said the newspaper, recognizing the sagacity of Yogi Berra’s remark that “It’s hard to make predictions, especially about the future.” Kapi‘olani Boulevard opened in segments, the last one being finished (excepting paving) late in March 1931. Ten years later, the Works Progress Administration laid a sidewalk for pedestrian use.<sup>36</sup>

The existence of a Kapi‘olani Boulevard in fairly close proximity to a Kapi‘olani Street darkened the cloud of confusion enveloping many citizens. The initial proposal for change would apply a new name to Ward Street, which would be straightened to run into Kapi‘olani Street at King. C. R. Welsh, the city planning engineer, got an order in mid 1938 to solicit the recommendation of Ward family members. Eventually the entire stretch became Ward Avenue.<sup>37</sup>

While all this went on, Thomas Square pursued its destined course. Legislative action in April 1929 spared it for another two years. Lawmakers tabled a bill repealing the joint resolution of 1925 forbidding the extension of Young Street, and did likewise to a measure letting the Board of Supervisors proceed with the cut. By this time, the Board stood alone in favoring surgery on the Square. In April 1931, the legislature again tabled a bill authorizing the Board to extend Young Street.<sup>38</sup>

The six-year struggle was now ended. Working under Chairman Lester McCoy, the Parks Board adopted a landscaping plan made by Catherine J. Richards and Robert O. Thompson. Also active in implementing the \$2,000 study was John F. Colburn III, Superintendent of Parks. The scheme stipulated a mock orange hedge along the curb line, a terrace, and a coral block wall broken by wide stairs on the Beretania Street side, and flower beds in the center of a walk bisecting the Square. Curving walks would run from each corner to a central plaza, where Cleghorn’s now-giant banyans would shade a pool 80 feet in diameter and 18 inches deep. The pool’s black tile lining would heighten the illusion of depth.<sup>39</sup>

Just a year later landscaping was still in progress but moving

fast. A Castle Memorial Fountain honoring the late Beatrice Castle Newcomb would provide a 42-foot jet of recirculated water to the pool, which would be defined by a coping of native sandstone framed by crushed coral. At dusk a flood of vari-colored lights controlled by automatic timers would play on the fountain.<sup>40</sup>

It was not until a full 95 years after the historic flag-raising that a plaque commemorated the event. In December 1938, the Daughters of Hawai'i, led by Mrs. Clifford Kimball, unveiled it. The Royal Hawaiian Band Glee Club sang, and the Reverend Henry P. Judd gave a historical sketch.<sup>41</sup>

Just three years later, Japanese bombs shattered Honolulu's quiet. Thomas Square felt their impact. In April 1942, the U.S. Army built barracks to quarter troops in the square. Everybody understood that these would remain "for the duration"—a phrase that will arouse memories in all who lived as adults through the war.<sup>42</sup>

In July 1945, even before hostilities ended, the Parks Board met to consider Thomas Square's future. Should it be restored, or should it accommodate civilian workers toiling at emergency federal housing projects? Be apprised that O'ahu's immortal housing problem strode full grown and with bulging muscles from the smoke of Pearl Harbor, and it seems destined to harass generations yet unborn.

The Parks Board, responsible for Thomas Square's administration, had an agreement with the Army for the latter to restore the area. But the Territory of Hawai'i owned the land. Without consulting the Parks Board, it asked the Army to leave the buildings to house workers. These unfortunates, limited to a total of 200-250 single men discharged from the armed services, would in the opinion of restorationists create a "slum in the center of Honolulu." The erstwhile champions of freedom were now referred to as "inmates."<sup>43</sup>

Parks Board chairman John D. Kilpatrick and Mrs. Walter Dillingham, among others, condemned the Territory's stance. Critics demanded a public hearing and suggested other quarters for the workers: Quonset huts, the Honolulu armory (a large building on the state capitol's site), or in the housing being built.

"Spare the Square" forces marshaled support from the Parks

Board, the Honolulu Clinic, and the Academy of Arts. After a two-week standoff, the Territory made concessions: half of the square would be fenced off for a park, housing occupancy would last not longer than 18 months, and the Hawaii Housing Authority (HAA) would have a man on duty for 24 hours to control the “inmates.” The *Honolulu Advertiser* dismissed the workers’ need with the remark that they had already waited four years for federal housing and could wait a while longer.<sup>44</sup>

The Territory could, of course, just take control of the Square if the Parks Board refused to go along. Under the wartime M-Day bill, the governor could act without public input, a fact not changed by the *Advertiser*’s assertion that the bill was probably unconstitutional. A hearing did occur on Friday, July 27. Here the chorus of protesters performed. But Governor Stainback was not converted. He already had an agreement whereby the Army consented to leave the former barracks and the Territory assumed responsibility for restoring the Square. On Monday, July 31, Stainback signed an executive order giving the Territory possession of the Square and the barracks; the Territory would allot \$17,000 to restore the park; it gave management of the housing to the HAA. The authority for this: the Hawaii Defense Act. During the first week in August, the Territory was preparing a contract releasing the Army from its obligation to restore Thomas Square, and it announced that the workers would move in about August 15.<sup>45</sup>

Japanese bombs changed the Square’s future in 1941; American bombs performed a like service in 1945. Suddenly war ended. On August 17, Stainback authorized the City and County Parks Board to deal directly with the Army, saying that housing at the Square was no longer needed. In November, the Army was “restoring” Thomas Square, and at the same time critics charged that it was doing a substandard job. Never again, they said, would the Square be the beauty spot laid out by the late Lester McCoy. They were right, but considering present-day use they were not foresighted.<sup>46</sup>

Those who mourned Thomas Square’s downfall must have registered surprise when in January 1954 Don Wolbrink, head of the Honolulu office of Harland Bartholomew & Associates, the plan-

ning firm, praised Thomas Square as a leading example of landscape architecture. A decade later, the City Council pondered a proposal to excavate a parking garage under the Square to ease a serious and growing space problem at Honolulu International (now Neal Blaisdell) Center. The idea died, and it was almost 25 years after that a multilevel parking structure rose next to the center's main buildings.<sup>47</sup>

In 1966, a \$50,000 facelift renovated and expanded the "comfort station," installed a coral walkway on the Beretania Street side, and thinned out growth to provide more light and air. George Walters, in charge of the project, got some fencing practice with the Outdoor Circle.<sup>48</sup>

One more controversy lay ahead. In 1970, the Board of Land and Natural Resources asked the Governor to issue an executive order giving the City and County clear title for park purposes. The city had requested right of entry to set aside a strip of Thomas Square for a Ward Avenue widening project involving the two blocks from King to Kīna'u Streets. By early 1972, some 80 percent of Ward had been thus magnified. The city proposed to take the sidewalk outside the park hedge and to relocate that walk inside the Square. But the Board of Land and Natural Resources, which had agreed in 1970, in 1972 challenged the city's contention that the widening was exempt from federal regulations forbidding the taking of park or historical site land for highway use.<sup>49</sup>

A springing to arms followed. Activism and confrontation, the Siamese twins which have pumped so much adrenalin into public (and sometimes not so public) affairs inspired the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee to Save Thomas Square. A good cause deserves a good acronym; unfortunately, AHCTSTS sounds like something one might hear at the Honolulu Zoo. At an airing, this group led a "parade of witnesses" including the Outdoor Circle, Life of the Land, the American Institute of Architects, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Garden Club of Honolulu, the Historic Buildings Task Force, and the Honolulu Academy of Arts. The presence of all this heavy artillery shows how much times had changed since the 1920s.<sup>50</sup>

As in most such cases, no one was singing "It's Not For Me To

Say." The state, searching for a clincher, produced the idea of an emergency listing of Thomas Square and of the Honolulu Academy of Arts in the National Register of Historic Places. The inclusion of the Academy required rule-bending: sites chosen were to be at least 50 years old, but the Academy was five years short. Nevertheless, the state sent off its request for action in April 1972. In May, a special letter brought back notice of selection. Thus it is that along Thomas Square's *ewa* boundary the hedge is not the edge.<sup>51</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *P*, 14 June 1845; Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 1, 1778-1854, *Foundation and Transformation* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1957) 262-3, hereinafter cited as Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Minister of the Interior* . . . 1845 (Honolulu: Polynesian Press, n.d.) 8-9, hereinafter cited as *Report of The Minister of The Interior*.

<sup>3</sup> Mary Charlotte Alexander and Charlotte Peabody Dodge, *Punahou, 1841-1941* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1941) vii, 50, 63, 71, and 74.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Minister of the Interior* . . . 1846, 6; PCR 2:34, 44, 58, 310, and 311; 3A:2, 23, 102, 142, 267, and 365-6; 3B:559 and 739; 4:45, 51 and 65; IDLF 18 Nov. 1846.

<sup>5</sup> Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, 1:296-8; PCR, 3B:687.

<sup>6</sup> *Report of the Minister of the Interior* . . . 1858, 5.

<sup>7</sup> *PCA*, 12 Mar. 1864; PCR 3B:751-3 and 805; Metcalf's original survey in Survey Division, DAGS; map of Kulaokahu'a, AH.

<sup>8</sup> *P*, 18 May 1850; IDLB, 20:219 and 21:99.

<sup>9</sup> CCM, 3:269; PCR 3B:635.

<sup>10</sup> *P*, 6 July, 10 and 17 Aug. 1850.

<sup>11</sup> W. L. Lee, letter to Joel Turrill, 1 June 1851 in "The Turrill Collection," *Sixty-Sixth Annual Report of the Hawaiian Historical Society for the Year 1957* (Honolulu: Advertiser Pub. Co., 1958) 42, hereinafter cited as Turrill Collection.

<sup>12</sup> Lee, letter to Turrill, 29 Dec. 1850; C. R. Bishop, letter to Turrill, 25 Feb. 1851; Bishop, letter to Turrill, 29 Apr. 1851; Lee, letter to Turrill, 1 June 1851; Lee, letter to Turrill, 24 Mar. 1852; Lee, letter to Turrill, 17 Dec. 1853; Bishop, letter to Turrill, 13 Apr. 1855; Bishop, letter to Turrill, 31 May 1858; Bishop, letter to Turrill, 27 Feb. 1860 (Turrill had died 28 Dec. 1859). Turrill Collection, 35, 39, 41, 42, 55, 73, 79, 89 and 91; *PCA*, 12 Mar. 1864.

<sup>13</sup> IDLF, 7 Jan. 1876, 17 April 1876, 23 Mar. 1878, 23 Aug. 1879, 9 Sept. 1879, 30 Oct. 1879, 12 and 13 Nov. 1879, and 16, 17, and 23 Feb. 1880.

<sup>14</sup> Maude Jones, Archivist of Hawaii, comp., "Thomas Square," ts., document no. 30, Historical File, AH.

- <sup>15</sup> PCR, 3B:437 and 561; *P*, 3 Aug. 1850.
- <sup>16</sup> A. S. Cleghorn, "Thomas Square," *HAA*, 1910:140, hereinafter cited as Cleghorn, "Thomas Square;" *PCA*, 12 Mar. 1864 and 7 April 1887; *HG*, 1 Oct. 1873; IDLB, 13:472.
- <sup>17</sup> *HG*, 22 Feb. 1882.
- <sup>18</sup> Cleghorn, "Thomas Square," 140; Sister Grace Marian, "The Honolulu Academy of Arts: Its Origins and Founders," thesis, U of Hawaii, 1954, 93, hereinafter cited as Marian, "The Honolulu Academy of Arts."
- <sup>19</sup> J. E. Bush to A. S. Cleghorn, 2 May 1883; IDLB, 22:330, R. S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. 3, 1874-1893, *The Kalakaua Dynasty* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1967) 259.
- <sup>20</sup> *PCA*, 7 Apr. 1887.
- <sup>21</sup> *PCA*, 8 Apr. 1887.
- <sup>22</sup> Diane Mei Lin Mark, *Seasons of Light: The History of Chinese Christian Churches in Hawaii* (Honolulu: Chinese Christian Association of Hawaii, 1989) 55-7.
- <sup>23</sup> *HA*, 30 Oct. and 6 Nov. 1943 and 26 Dec. 1944. These references detail site acquisition and building plans; *HA*, 4 Oct. 1947 concerns site change and transfer of title to the Territory.
- <sup>24</sup> *HSB*, 20 Jan. 1933.
- <sup>25</sup> *HSB*, 25 Apr. 1935 and 8 Dec. 1938; *HA*, 26 Sept. 1946.
- <sup>26</sup> *HSB*, 8 Nov. 1959.
- <sup>27</sup> *HSB*, 17 Aug. 1961 and 10 Apr. 1974.
- <sup>28</sup> Ramona Mullahey, "Linekona School and McKinley High School," *Historic Hawaii* (Oct. 1990): 10-12.
- <sup>29</sup> *Index of All Grants Issued by the Hawaiian Government Previous to March 31, 1886* (Honolulu: Pacific Commercial Advertiser, 1887) 13.
- <sup>30</sup> Marian, "The Honolulu Academy of Arts," 108, 111, 119 and 130; Historic Buildings Task Force File TMK 2-4-14-21, AH; Historic Buildings Task Force, *Old Honolulu: A Guide to Oahu's Historic Buildings* (Honolulu: Historic Buildings Task Force, 1969); *HA* 25 Feb., 9 Apr., and 8 Dec. 1977.
- <sup>31</sup> *HA* and *HSB*, 9 Feb. 1978.
- <sup>32</sup> J. A. Hassinger, letter to Joseph Marsden, 26 Sept. 1895, IDLB, 74: 84.
- <sup>33</sup> *HA*, 19 Feb. 1925.
- <sup>34</sup> *HA*, 19 Feb. 1925; *HSB*, 14 Apr. 1927 and 30 Mar. 1929.
- <sup>35</sup> *HSB*, 22 Mar. 1929.
- <sup>36</sup> *HA*, 28 Mar. and 2 June 1926; *HSB*, 10 May 1929; *HA*, 8 Mar. 1931.
- <sup>37</sup> *HA*, 6 May 1939.
- <sup>38</sup> *HSB*, 15 Apr. 1929; *HA*, 16 Apr. 1929 and 17 and 18 April 1931.
- <sup>39</sup> *HA*, 12 Sept. 1931; *HSB*, 23 Jan. 1932 (reproduces a plan of the park).
- <sup>40</sup> *HSB*, 3 Sept. 1932.
- <sup>41</sup> *HA*, 2 Dec. 1938.
- <sup>42</sup> *HSB*, 15 Apr. 1942.
- <sup>43</sup> *HSB*, 11 and 18 July 1945; *HA*, 12, 18 and 19 July 1945.
- <sup>44</sup> *HSB*, 19 July 1945; *HA*, 18 and 28 July 1945.



<sup>45</sup> *HA*, 20, 28, and 31 July 1945; *HSB*, 27 and 30 July and 9 Aug. 1945.

<sup>46</sup> *HSB*, 17 Aug. 1945; *HA*, 18 Aug. and 4 Nov. 1945.

<sup>47</sup> *HSB*, 23 Jan. 1954; *HA*, 3 June 1965.

<sup>48</sup> *HA*, 9 Aug. 1966.

<sup>49</sup> *HSB*, 26 Sept. 1970; *HA*, 7 Aug. 1971 and 23 Feb. 1972.

<sup>50</sup> *HA*, 23 Feb. 1972.

<sup>51</sup> *HSB*, 16 May 1972.

